

OU baseball player has movie part

By KEN VOYLES

Wanted: A dozen or more actors for roles in a movie about baseball. Baseball players needed. Experience: Must have played high school and college baseball. Must know what to do on the playing field in front of a camera. Salary: \$50 a day.

The movie: a biography of Ron LeFlore, Detroit Tiger centerfielder. The place: Tiger Stadium.

Sound strange? Baseball players acting? That was just the beauty of the whole thing. The baseball players were acting just as themselves and nothing else before the camera's eye.

Dave Jones, a Plymouth resident, was one of the chosen few to get the chance to step into a faded Tiger uniform recently and perform at his sport before a camera.

He, along with some teammates from the Oakland University baseball team, were chosen to portray the Detroit Tigers baseball team in the best and grandest traditions of the Hollywood flick.

Jones was picked with four other Oakland players to portray various Tigers for all of the action sequences

during the movie. Jones wore the uniform of right handed pitcher Joe Coleman. He never speaks during the film.

On the first day of shooting, the Oakland players and a number of Wayne State University athletes were bused into Tiger Stadium. It was about an hour before the Tigers were scheduled to play the Boston Red Sox in a real game. There were more than 30,000 people in the stands.

"We came out onto the field and performed as if it were a real game. I went to the pitching mound and just pitched. That's what I did every day," said Jones. "It was strange with all these people in the stands. But I enjoyed it."

Pitch and pitch he did. At times, the filming went on for 12 hours a day. But, according to Jones, it really wasn't that hard because he was doing what came naturally to him. All in all, Jones and the other collegiate extras worked six straight days.

"It was so natural for me up on the mound that it wasn't tough at all," Jones said. "I just stood there and pitched. They would move the camera

around for different angles. At times they wanted me to throw specific pitches."

Not only did Jones receive \$50 a day for his pitching in front of the camera, but he also got the chance to rub elbows with some of the Tigers of today and years past.

"It was real interesting talking to the Tigers. It was nice because a lot of them aren't much older than me," Jones is 21 years old.

On one day, some of the greats out of the past came to the stadium for the shooting. Al Kaline, Bill Freehan, Norm Cash and Billy Martin to name a few.

"That was probably the most fun of the whole thing. I even got their autographs and was able to talk to them face to face," Jones explained.

The Oakland players were chosen for the movie because the Oakland baseball coach, Dick Dietz, knew the Wayne State baseball coach, who was in charge of gathering the extras. Between the two of them they picked

the squad. Only seniors were chosen for the acting parts.

"I was very surprised and excited when they told me," Jones said. "It came rather unexpectedly." Jones received word of the role just one day before the shooting was to begin.

Jones started playing baseball when he was 10 years old. He turned pitcher his first year at Troy High where he was a three-year starter. In his senior year, he was chosen to the All-Oakland A League team.

From Troy, Jones went to Mott Community College for one year and then to Oakland. At Oakland, he received a baseball scholarship. In his first year, Jones recorded a 5-3 record. As a junior, he was 9-6. Last year he was 8-5.

Jones was chosen to the all-conference team two times in his pitching career at Oakland.

"It was quite an experience," said Jones, who now works for the Troy Parks and Recreation Department.

Sportclub team to play Express

Sportclub 1924, Inc., winners of the 1977 Michigan Soccer League, will face the Detroit Express in an exhibition game on Friday, July 28, at 6:30 p.m. at Oak Park Beach on Cass Lake.

Established in 1924, Sportclub is one of Detroit's oldest soccer clubs, and has produced many championship teams over the years. The squad leads its division in the Michigan Soccer

League again this year. Oak Park Beach, the long-time home field of Sportclub 1924, Inc., is located on Greer Road just east of Hiller Road in West Bloomfield Township. The Sportclub-Express game will feature live music, a refreshment concession and an opportunity to meet the players after the contest. Admission is \$1 per person. Children will be admitted without charge.

Nature area opens longer

The Nature Center at Proud Lake Recreation Area has announced its summer schedule. From now until Labor Day the center will be open from 10 a.m. until 5 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday, including July 4 and

Labor Day. A new parking lot has been installed. Hiking trails start at the building and pass through different areas offering a variety of plants and animals to view.

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